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Cont  
contacting said oocyte with sperm,  
wherein said oocyte is inhibited from activation during fertilization *in vitro*.

D3  
July 23  
15. (twice amended) A method of activating an oocyte *in vitro*, the method comprising:  
contacting said oocyte with nitric oxide (NO), an NO donor, nitric oxide synthase (NOS),  
or inducer of NOS;

contacting said oocyte with sperm; and  
maintaining said oocyte until the oocyte has undergone at least one cell division,  
wherein said maintaining step indicates that the oocyte is activated.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-5, 13, and 15 are pending after entry of the amendments set forth herein.

Claims 1, 5 and 15 are amended. Support for the amendment to Claim 1 may be found throughout the specification, in particular at the following location: page 5, line 29, wherein language reciting reentry into the cell cycle can be found, and in Claim 16. Claim 15 has been amended so that it is now an independent claim. Support for the amendment of Claim 5 can be found in the original Claim 5.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in view of the remarks made herein.

Applicants submit that all of the claims are in condition for allowance, which action is requested. If the Examiner finds that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.